The Unitarian Christian

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Purpose: To preserve and strengthen the Christian essence of Unitarianism

EDITORIAL

Dr. Francis A. Christie once published a paper on "The Sacramental Value of Places." By association, places become eloquent of the events they have witnessed, and human spirits tend to yield to the mood of pride, regret, wistfulness, or exhilaration which that eloquence evokes. It was inevitable that John Wesley should be at his best as a preacher when standing on his father's tombstone in Epworth church yard. At one time during his term of office, President William H. Taft accepted an invitation from the Laymen's League to come to Boston and address his fellow-liberals. Standing in the pulpit of the First Church, Mr. Taft began by congratulating himself on the privilege of visiting Boston and having "a good refreshing bath in authentic Unitarianism." Had someone suggested that he had his own Abana and Pharpar in which he might bathe and be refreshed, he would doubtless have replied that no river could equal the Charles in the particular sacramental value he desired.

More than one Unitarian minister has confessed that he is never so good a Unitarian as when he comes to Boston for the May Meetings. As a Fellowship, we have our modest tradition, in its humble way a good one; but for the greater part, located in Boston. Moreover, there are the daily cravings that seek satisfaction in vain for fifty-one lonesome weeks in each year, but are richly gratified during these few days of Anniversary Week. How good it is to lay aside this heavy sense of uniqueness, this stigma of solecism, and find ourselves surrounded by sympathy, understanding, kinship of spirit, the companionship of other birds of the same feather. How delightful to bump into these fortuitous encounters with old friends; the walks, lunches, bull-sessions far into the night, the incidental half-hours of intimacy for comparing notes. One of the sweetest of our traditions is the friendship of our ministers. We are so small in numbers that every minister can know every other; if not, it is his own fault. Therefore, Good Friends, Boston may be a funny place, but it offers you whatever sacramental value you can find in its historic localities. In addition, it extends to you a generous, heartfelt, and loving welcome.

C. E. P.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
Onward and Upward Forever

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HUMANISM AND THEISM

By The Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D.
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The Dorians, Aeolians, and Ionians who swarmed into Greece from the north, perhaps a thousand years before Christ, naturally brought their own Gods with them. They had to spend the next three or four centuries in the task of accommodating these Gods to their new home and their new functions. It was a difficult task, long-drawn-out, the foremost preoccupation of their philosophical activity, and grew more confused and baffling the more they speculated about it. Finally Protagoras, who was born in 480 B. C., and became the first of the Sophists, made his protest. Toward the end of his life he wrote a book which began with these words: "As for the Gods, I do not know whether they exist or not. Life is too short for such difficult enquiries." Another celebrated sentence from the beginning of his work on Truth is this: "Man is the measure of all things, determining what does and what does not exist." He was banished from Athens for his impiety, and was lost at sea on his way to Sicily. Heralds searched Athens from end to end, collected all the copies of his book they could find, and burned them in the market-place.

The episode justifies the statement that Protagoras was the first Humanist. It also helps us to define Humanism. It is "Any system of thought or action which assigns a predominant interest to the affairs of men, as compared to the Supernatural or the abstract." Or it is: "The philosophic attitude which regards the interpretation of human experience as the primary concern of all philosophizing, and asserts the adequacy of human knowledge for this purpose." Or it is: "Insistence on the dignity of humanity, and refusal to find in the Divine anything external or superior to mankind." Alexander Pope was evidently a humanist:

"Know then thyself. Presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man."

Humanism was, in its origin and has always remained, a protest against unprofitable speculation concerning matters which, by their very nature, lie beyond the reach of man's comprehension; and an appeal to philosophy to give the first freshness of its vigor to problems that fall within its scope. It appears periodically in the history of thought,

REV. CHARLES E. PARK

to keep philosophy within its proper bounds. When scribes, rabbis, and Pharisees in Palestine could find nothing better to do than to get themselves all snarled up in useless conjectures as to the meaning and scope of their precious Law, Jesus appeared teaching the importance of considering the dignity of human nature, the potential capabilities of the human spirit, and the intimations of God's nature available to us in the relations of a human father to his child.

Another humanistic protest can be discovered in the Middle Ages. Every detail in the story of the Great Awakening, the Revival of Learning, the Renaissance, the beginnings of Nationalism and Foreign Relations, the Universities, the Protestant Reformation was essentially humanistic in character in that it was a focusing of attention on man, his rights, liberties, present capacities, and unsuspected possibilities.

As it has reappeared among us of recent years, Humanism is the same protest that it was with Protagoras. In fact no less a leader than F. C. S. Schiller himself has said that "Modern Humanism may without injustice be described as Neo-Protagoreanism." We have seen that his Humanism carried Protagoras to the point of a perfectly candid Agnosticism: "As for the Gods I do not know whether

they exist or not." Every one of us is bound to make that admission. Whether we like it or not we are all agnostics. And there is the same difference between Agnosticism and Theism as there is between Agnosticism and Atheism. Let us say that faith is the exercise of our powers of credulity. Then the same faith aimed in one direction carries the Agnostic to Theism, and aimed in the opposite direction carries him to Atheism. The Atheist frequently laughs at faith as an act of mere "wishful believing", a device by which a man cajoles himself into a belief that he wants to hold, but which austere knowledge will not justify. Yet the Agnostic in his unassailable candor is the only one who has the right to laugh; and he laughs at the Atheist just as scornfully as at the Theist. He knows that the Atheist arrives at his atheism by precisely the same exercise of his powers of credulity, the same device of wishful believing, the same faith that the Theist uses to arrive at his theism. One says: You cannot know that God exists; therefore he does not exist. The other retorts: You cannot know that God does not exist; therefore he exists. And the Agnostic, with his quiet smile, remarks: There are no grounds whatever for your quarrel. Both positions have exactly the same support from knowledge: none at all. Belief in God and denial of God are alike matters of faith, not of knowledge. Be advised by me: stop quarrelling. You are proving nothing but your own folly.

In its beginnings Humanism was not atheism. Protagoras was too good a philosopher to mistake faith for knowledge. He realized that the atheist is just as guilty of "wishful believing" as the theist; if he could not be a theist, by the same token neither could he be an atheist. Jesus was not a philosopher, and therefore not a Humanist in any technical sense. But all his convictions regarding mankind were pure humanism. He taught the dignity of man; man's ability to recognize and crave the spiritual values; and man's potential God-likeness, that needed only cultivation and development. We may call Jesus an unconscious Humanist, for if you take away the humanistic element in his teachings there is little left. But his humanism was in no remotest sense an alternative to Theism; it was the direct consequence of his Theism. The same is true of Erasmus and his group of Humanists: take away their Theism and their Humanism vanishes like blowing out a candle. The dignities and embryonic capabilities they saw in mankind were God's gift to man, annd only under God's directing guidance could they be properly studied and developed.

Not until we come to Auguste Comte do we come to the first hint of that idea: that Humanism is an alternative to Theism. Choose either God or man, either Theism or Humanism, but not both. In his *Religion of Humanity* Comte sets up humanity not only as the beneficiary for whose service his religion exists, but as the object of his religious faith and worship, to whom his veneration is offered. We may remember that he defined his Humanism as "the refusal to find anything in God external or superior to mankind." God is superfluous. Everything we call God is already in mankind.

Many of us can distinctly remember that when this latest attention to Humanism appeared among us forty years or so ago, this was the first philosophical monkey wrench they threw into the works. God is completely exhausted in his creation. He has put all of himself into his creatures, especially man. In striving to know man we are striving to know God, because there is nothing of God external to man. From this position it was an easy step, a step which a few among our Humanists seemed eager to take, to out-and-out Atheism. If everything we call God is already present in humanity, why is it necessary, and how is it possible to distinguish God from Humanity? A distinction without a difference simply clutters up the situation. Let us discard both the name God, and the concept.

It was at this point that the noble word Humanism took on its unfortunate connotation and became a synonym for Atheism. Although this mood did not last long, and although hardly a single avowed Humanist today will allow himself to be called an Atheist, yet for many of us the mischief is done: of course a Humanist is an Atheist. And that is the *de facto* condition we may as well recognize, and which ought to make us ashamed of ourselves. But who can say to what extent the quarrel continues; or with what degree of bitterness or prejudice; or whether or not it is gradually abating; and the less said about it the sooner will it come to an end?

The curious thing about it all is that both sides seem to have forgotten our tradition: Unitarians are open-minded seekers of the truth; each is basically independent of all the rest, and is free to arrive at his convictions without prejudice to his good

standing, no matter how devastating those convictions may be. As to his purity of motive, mental ability and moral integrity, each is expected to be worthy of the respect and trust of his companions, and is assured that he shall have that respect and trust. The quarrel, if there is a quarrel, goes squarely against the grain of our own Congregational tradition. Perhaps it is chiefly due to certain misunderstandings. For example:

(1) There is the matter of definitions. Do Humanists and Theists mean the same thing when they use the word "God"? Or at least, does each understand adequately what the other means when he says "God"? No controversy can be justified until the terms used mean the same things to both parties. Present indications are that the Humanist insists on his own restricted meaning for the word God, and demands that all others shall use the word in that meaning. The Theist retorts that the word "God" is a basket, and that it is the inalienable right of each individual to fill that basket with the meanings he considers correct. Not only so, it is also his right to change his mind for sufficient cause, and empty out all the former meanings and replace them with new ones as his growing mind may dictate.

This right the Humanist seems to deny. From the way he talks he seems to think the basket-word "God" can hold but one meaning, the meaning we all put into it when as children we "thought and spoke and understood as a child." If he would grant this point: that the basket, by deliberate design, is meant to be as pliant and adaptable as such a receptacle can be, there is a very good chance that he might examine the contents of his Theist opponent's basket, and find them to be in every particular just what he himself believes. Very often, if the truth could be known, the Humanist is no more atheistical than the Theist; and the Theist is no more theistical than the Humanist.

(2) There is the matter of integrity. The Humanist must be credited with scrupulous honesty. He will speak freely of Reality, Creative Intelligence, Uncaused Cause, or Providence; he will even use circumlocutions: Over Soul, like Emerson; Something there is, eternal and natural, like Loasu; The Power in us, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, like Matthew Arnold; Path, Motive, Guide, Original and End, like Doctor Johnson; but he will not use the word "God". He will not run the risk of being mistaken for one of the Fundamentalists or Bible-Christians who still think of God as the Enlarged Man, or as the benign Old Gentleman with the long white beard who loves little boys and girls and takes care of them. Nor will he run the risk of deceiving one of these primitive theists into thinking that he believes as they do.

The Theist on the other hand feels no hesitation in saying "God". He claims that he cannot deceive the strictest Fundamentalist by that term. While his concept of God may be far more rarefied, it still does not preclude any trait or attribute, whether abstract or concrete, that commands human admiration. His God is and has everything good that the noblest man is or has; and he cannot mislead anyone, because he knows that his hearer's concept of God, however rudimentary, is included, along with much that his hearer may not even understand, in his own concept of God.

(3) There is the question: where to stop speculating. For all of us human beings this life on earth is like a spot-light of conscious knowledge. We start out to explore it, learn more about it, so that we may live in it safely and intelligently. Some of us feel that the most important things to learn are: To what larger region does this spot-lighted area belong? Of what larger realm of connscious knowledge are we a part? Who are our neighbors? By what facts and forces and realities and conditions are we surrounded? So we speculate our way out to the very edge of our spot-light only to find that we are confronted by a great wall of darkness which we cannot penetrate. We try at other points of our circumference only to find it always the same: we are entirely surrounded by this encircling gloom, this dark wall of the unknowable.

Whereupon the Theist soliloquizes: True, however eagerly I frequent doctor and saint, and hear great argument, I evermore come out by that same door where in I went. Yet I cannot give up my quest. I must keep myself alert, my eyes open, my soul sensitive to whatever syllable of this surrounding Mystery I may be allowed to spell. And the persistence of the Theist is by no means barren of results. Gleams and flashes of insight do come to him from the surrounding darkness, and help to lighten man's way through life's maze.

Meanwhile, the Humanist after one or two glan-

ces at the encircling gloom, also soliloquizes: What's the use? I call to mind what some wag once said about philosophy. Philosophy is a blind man in a dark room, hunting for a black cat, which is not there. The Theist may continue his unavailing speculations if he cares to; but even he will have to stop sooner or later. I prefer to stop sooner. My days on earth are numbered; and there is too much to do and learn in my spot-light. So he wheels about, and turns a keen, untroubled face home to the instant need of things.

In this matter of speculation the only difference between Humanist and Theist is that the Humanist stops sooner. But is that any ground for hard feeling? Would it not be well to remember that our resources are too meager and our energies too scanty to be wasted in needless controversy? Each needs the other, just as much as the extrovert captain on the steamer's bridge, peering into the night, and the introvert chief engineer watching his gauges down in his brightly-lighted engine room, need each other, and are the best of friends.

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Lord, help us to think of the millions of people throughout our land who are doing what we are striving to do: who are seeking thy presence, if haply they may find thee, to feel the security of thy power, and to know the comfort of thy love. Let the thought of these countless fellow-worshippers of ours be for us a bond of union. Though it last only for the single hour, let it remind us that thou hast made of one blood all the nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hast bound us by the common sympathies of our humanity into one great family of thy sons and daughters. Lord, we are all weak, all dependent, all bewildered and confused. Like prisoners of hope, we all turn to the Stronghold, seeking in our different ways a single end: to know thy truth, that we may do thy will and serve thy holy purpose.

Open our hearts now to the opportunities of service that lie all about us. Endow us richly with love for thee, and our fellow-men. Help us to discourage unto ourselves all ambitions that are selfish, to overcome suspicion, to conquer passion and prejudice. Make us sensitive to the influences of this place, that it may invite us to nurture within our hearts the spirit of him whose only pride was his love for thee, and whose deepest prayer was that thy will should be done in each choice and decision of his.

Teach us a reverent and humble appreciation of the extraordinary blessings by which we are surrounded. Remind us of the fidelity and devotion of our fore-fathers, who in faith and loyalty wrought out the foundations of the fair life we enjoy. Help us to recognize without evasion the full nature of our inheritance: not only its blessings but its duties; not only its privilege but its responsibility, that we may be worthy sons of noble fathers, and may carry on to its fulfillment the high task they have left to us.

Shield us from the temptations of our lot: from vanity, pride, indifference, and self-seeking; from all perplexity and amazement. Lead us in the plain path of simple duty and joyful service, that as we have freely received we may freely give; and as we are loved by thee, we may in turn learn that kinship with mankind that lies deeper than any animosity, and makes us one human brotherhood.

We ask it in the spirit of him whose heart was wide as the world, but had no room for a single unkind thought. Amen.

NECESSITY FOR COMMITMENT

By Rev. Amos B. Horlacher, D.D.
President, Unitarian Christian Fellowship

Does religion enjoy a special immunity from decision and commitment-making not vouchsafed to other vital areas in the affairs of men? Can the religious man, like the learned judge, reserve decision until a "more convenient season"; or like the scientist in his laboratory, suspend judgment until all the facts are in and an elaborate program of experimentation is carried through? On some questions the answer is undoubtedly "yes" and properly so. We need not rush a decision on the authorship of the Epistle to the Galatians nor commit ourselves unseasonably to the eponymous interpretation of the Hebrew patriarchs. But can we be as leisurely about the nature of man or the objective reality of good and evil in the universe? Are there some things worth dying for and still others that have little significance beyond our taste or personal preference? Can morality rest and endure on no other foundation than its own inherent reasonableness and demonstrated utility; or must it be supported by some metaphysical interpretation of life that is essentially religious in content and import? Nobody so far as I know really "knows" the answer to these questions. They are none-the-less issues upon which responsible men must make up their minds and, when great issues are at stake, make commitments. Reports from men in the concentration camps and those who survived the horrors of communist brain-washings are almost unanimous that it was their undeviating commitment to the principle that good and evil are rooted in the nature of things that brought them through. For them debate had ended and a commitment beyond even the issues of life and death had begun.

The time was August 1939. In the last desperate hours before the German attack on Poland, President Roosevelt had called our ambassador in Warsaw to ask what he could do to stave off the execution of Germany's fateful decision to attack. The answer of Ambassador Biddle was prompt and devastating. "Nothing, Mr. President, without a commitment."

There is a disposition among liberals to ask for more time; to be permitted to reserve judgment until the facts are clearer and better established. This is the liberal way and in general it is a good way. The trouble is that life is often not so obliging. There is a time for talk and a time for action and unless and until this necessity is faced and acted upon, those of us who call ourselves liberals in religion or politics, or in any other area of major human concern, are going to find ourselves still debating long after the conservative groups have made their decisions and gone to work. Consider the incident cited above. Who in America did not want peace? But how many were willing to make the hard choices and back the government with firm commitments to the threatened nations? At the cost of hundreds of thousands of American lives and billions in treasure we have learned that such commitments, difficult and dangerous as they are, are part of the price we must pay for peace in the world, even if that peace is nothing better than an armed truce.

There is no less a need for commitment in the field of education. Failure to make such decisions as the times require may have less dramatic and immediate results than indecisiveness in the fast-moving affairs of state, but they are none-the-less vital for the future of our country and possibly of the world. What are some of these decisions — commitments if you will — that the educator must make? The first and major decision is complex; with each variable dependent upon the other. It may be stated as follows: Who shall be educated and to what ends and by what means? Shall education for all our citizens be restricted to the tool subjects which we loosely call the three R's? Shall we select from them the five or ten percent of the intellectually elite and provide higher education for these only? And what shall be the end and goal of such education? Shall it be the hitherto widely accepted idea that the proper goal of all higher education is to produce a scholar and a gentleman? Shall education undertake to transmit the basic elements and usages of our culture without criticism — the so-called "teacher should stick to the facts" school; or should the heritage of our culture be transmitted in an atmosphere of appreciation

and criticism — "the facts should be learned in their proper context of meaning and value" school? And beyond this the thorny question of methods and means must be settled. Shall we follow the instrumentalist methods advocated by Dewey and now widely used in elementary education; or the rationalist's methods involving concentration upon the classics of the western world as advocated by Hutchins and his school? These are difficult questions to decide and they are made more difficult because they demand decision now, not on some pleasantly future day when we can get around to them.

Life cannot wait and children cannot wait while educators debate the question. Decisions must be made NOW, TODAY; and every decision that is not merely trivial involves a commitment, stated or implied, involving a way of life; one set of values as against another, or one estimate of the future as against another. Let us not delude ourselves by supposing that because we have not taken part in such debates that we have made no decisions. In matters of great pith and moment such as the foreign policy of the nation and the education of its children and youth, to make no decision on what we believe or to allow others to make the decision for us is TO MAKE A DECISION! The mechanism involved is simple. It is merely that we have allowed others more resolute to vote our proxies without protest from us.

Some will look upon this point of view as anti-intellectual. Others will see in it a drift toward neo-orthodoxy. It is my hope that such persons will take a second and long look at the disquieting facts of the world in which we live — a world that is even now contemplating the evacuation of its great cities against an Armageddon the dimensions of which the prophet Isaiah could not so much as imagine. They are invited as well to contemplate the phenomenon of national hysteria wherein neighborly Americans have turned informers, gossip-mongers, and worse against their friends and fellow citizens, producing in our once free land a fear not unlike that which the Russian people know when a rap on the door is heard at midnight. Let them consider the phenomenon of the Junior Senator from Wisconsin who with Mephistophelean cleverness has induced millions of otherwise sane and sensible Americans to shun the light of reason and truth for what the Alsops have called "the night of the mind". Can anyone seriously contend that in the face of these things, religious men are not called upon to make and act upon commitments? Are there still two sides to the question about human freedom and dignity? For myself, I am committed to what we have the right to call "Christian Values" in this area. They are no longer open or debatable questions for me — and this despite any act of Congress, Papal Bull, or the findings of a top-level panel of social scientists. And the reason for my intransigence is not obscure or difficult to explain. I hold them as religious convictions. Their validity rests upon nothing more —nor less — than my beliefs in the nature of God and Man.

In my life as a minister I have met a few professed atheists and more agnostics. I cannot recall a single instance when I did not get on well with people holding such convictions despite our fundamental differences. I think I have learned the secret of this. It is that both of us took religion seriously, to affirm, deny or question according to our several persuasions, but in all cases as a serious matter. And by the same token I believe I can now recognize the origin of my impatience with much of what goes under the name of liberal religion. I am persuaded that it is not seriously concerned with the deeper issues of life. It likes to debate and dispute. It rarely affirms. It delights in plans and strategy but it is reluctant to engage. Its activities and enterprises, though clever, brilliant and almost always praiseworthy are many times out of the mainstream of human life. Not infrequently, when viewed from the large perspective of the mission of religion in the world, they are trivial. Serious men cannot live and work on that plane. Either religion has a serious and determinative relation to their activities or it is a dispensible frill. And if it would be serious, it must come to grips with real issues and demand commitments that cost something. Time is sometimes allowed us for the gathering of evidence but often it is not. A useful religion must be ready, available and compelling.

There are three incidents in the life of Jesus which when taken together are very instructive. The first is the occasion when he was speaking on the demands of discipleship. "Which of you", he said, "desiring to build a tower will not first sit down and count the cost to see if he hath wherewith

to complete it". Let us keep these words in mind as we think back to the days of his temptation in the wilderness and forward to the last hours of his agony on the cross. One wonders whether that agony would have been endurable: whether, indeed, there would ever have been a cross if some fundamental decisions and equally profound commitments had not been made in the wilderness.

It is, of course, true that most lives are not lived in the shadow of such great questions as Jesus faced, but the need for moral and spiritual decision is no less imperative. Normally these decisions are made in the context of one's church and his spiritual heritage. This is true whether the person is liberal, conservative or orthodox in his outlook. If it should happen that the liberal church provides a man no training, practice or resource in this direction, he may and all too often does turn to a church that will supply what he seeks and needs. Herein lies much of the strength of orthodoxy. It knows that serious men must make commitments and it ministers to that need. We may decry the attendant theology that is involved but we disregard the fact at our peril.

Our society is moving with great rapidity into an uncertain future. Patterns of life and thought hitherto adequate for the guidance of oncoming generations have and will become increasingly subject to modification. People will ask themselves and the church some hard questions. It will be a great tragedy for the liberal church if its answers are so conditioned and so uncertain that they are no answers at all.

Men have always looked to religion for the bread of life. It is unlikely that they will cease to do so in the future. Creeds are not this bread. Nor is psychology, or sociology in the guise of religion. That sustaining bread is nothing less than a man's awareness of God in the world and in his life. We can know a man has found it when, on the great issues of life, he will say with quiet humility and deep conviction: "This I believe".

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MIND AND MATTER

By Dr. Robert W. Pearson, M. D.
Newburyport, Mass.

The problem of the relation of Mind to Matter has long been a controversial one among philosophers. There has always been a desire on their part to try to prove that either Mind is merely an offshoot of Matter or that Matter is only a concept of the Mind. Those who could not go along with either of these tenets have believed that the universe was made up of two separate and distinct entities, Mind and Matter, and that they were closely interrelated in some mysterious way. Thus we have the respective classifications of, Realists, Idealists and Dualists.

Let us examine the human brain, agreed by all to be the locus of memory and intelligence. We find a large, soft and mushy organ, dirty white in color with a gray coating which proves upon examination to be of infinitely complex structure. A large municipal telephone exchange would be relatively simple by comparison.

We can tell nothing about the intelligence of the possessor of the brain before us. We know nothing about his thoughts, hopes, knowledge, wisdom or beliefs among other things. We believe he was born with certain instincts which travelled over these very neurons under our eyes and that as his life proceeded, he stored away visual, aural, tactile and other sense impressions into those nerve cells. These developed certain association pathways between each other that accounted for the common principles of memory which we recognize today. We have no idea where his childhood memories are located or where his most recent ones are. We cannot even locate his so-called subconscious mind. No one has ever been able to locate these areas. Why, for example, should lesions of the frontal lobe, such as tumors, be associated with a patient whose appearance is a happy one?

A few years ago, the case history tells us, this patient suffered a concussion lasting a few minutes, and he made an uneventful recovery. We know that this meant he had many microscopic hemorrhages throughout his cerebrum. We are told he had a permanent loss of memory for the hour preceding the accident. How could this be? What

happened to those memories? They had been recorded at the time in his cerebrum the same as any others, yet now they are gone forever, just because his brain received a jolt!

As the patient aged he forgot more and more of what he had done in the recent past years, but he remembered the days of his earlier youth more clearly than ever. How could this be? We know that ordinarily the more recent the event, the more clearly it is recalled, yet as the brain degenerates from lack of oxygen, due to arteriosclerosis of the vessels, the reverse is true.

The whole problem was epitomized in the ten-year-old child who, when being shown a picture of the human brain, remarked with disbelief, "How on earth could anybody think with that thing?"

The great problem of philosophy and, one which opens wide the vistas of Religion, is also found in the problem of Evolution. Charles Darwin's theory undoubtedly had much to do with the materialistic philosophies developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He reduced the whole problem to a mere matter of the survival of the fittest. "May the best man win" is the law of the jungle. The strongest and most skillful animal survives, the species is propagated by the better stock and is assumed therefore to produce a continuous improvement in development.

To anyone materialistically inclined, this is a very attractive theory and very likely the Darwinian mechanism does operate to a large extent. But a little reflection will show that it is far from providing a satisfactory explanation of all the facts.

Take, for instance, the examples of protective coloration and camouflage in wildlife. Can we honestly believe that a certain species of butterfly actually developed two spots fortuitously that slowly resembled the eyes of an owl as a means of natural deception toward enemies? Shall we believe that the butterflies without such spots were all devoured and only the owl-like species survived; that as they propagated they gradually developed better spots until they grew to their present uncanny likeness?

How does the evolutionary theory explain the ability of the salamander and other animals to alter their appearance as the background changes? Are we to believe that they developed this amazing ability originally purely by chance!

The sea anemone pick the night of the full moo to swarm upon the beaches, there laying thei eggs, apparently knowing that the following night will all have successively lower levels of high tid so that eggs may grow unmolested for a full mont in time for hatching and swimming away whe the waters return. Can we believe that only thos millions survived which learned how to calculat the maximum tide level and full moon, and a others could not propagate their species!

The ability of herring and trout to find thei way up suitable spawning places through over whelming obstacles, has long amazed the studen of nature. True, the weaker ones probably coul not jump high enough while the more capable one lead the school to the river's mouth through mile of ocean. And perhaps this was indeed accomplishe by means of a very sensitive mechanism for de tecting decreased salinity of water, but why di they always choose the same river? How did th first ones, thousands or millions of years ago, fin out that their laying of eggs required passage u over all those rapids, if the eggs were to survive Surely this is not explained by the law accordi to which only the fittest survive!

Are the fish merely following the currents the Behaviorist might well reply? But then h does this explain the strange antics of the Eur pean Eels which annually migrate across the Atl tic ocean, breeding in the West Indies after wh the adults die but the young make their way t thousand miles to Europe in two and one h years, maturing as they go!

The evidence for wonder is overwhelming the study of wildlife. The habitat of the Ar Tern, the Homing Pigeon, dogs and cats, and the study of embryology, the growth of cells, leave the student of nature filled with wonder.

Is it instinct or some sort of telepathy in t "more intelligent" animals?

Darwin merely begged the question when implies it is all merely a plan of chance and for The very word "plan" suggests and implies ce bration.

Now we come to the most difficult question all, how could a mental concept such as a p carry out a physical process, the beginning development of life?

Goethe said, "To create something you must first be something". In human affairs there must be some one or some machine to make a plan a reality. The plan may commence as a dream in a man's mind, a day dream or a vision, perhaps an end product of cerebration, but once the plan has been created in man's mind it requires some physical force to make it materialize.

In Man we have that rare combination of Mind so amazingly integrated with Matter that ideas can become realities. The same brain which dreamed the idea can make the muscles work in writing, speaking or initiating it. Yet, rare is the man who can dream prophetic concepts and be, as well, a man of action. Yet, all of us have it in us to do both. Heine once said, "The men of action are, after all, only the unconscious instruments of the men of thought".

Although it appears that a mind planned, created and developed living objects over millions of years into the amazing panorama of life we know today there has never been one jot of scientific evidence, in the usual sense of the word, to prove it. Yet the more one contemplates and studies the whole picture, the more one becomes convinced it must be so.

Only recently in the field of parapsychology has research been able to provide any laboratory evidence to prove that mind has some measure of direct control over matter.
of traditional beliefs.

Today the attention of many thoughtful lay and professional people in both religious and scientific pursuits are concentrating more than ever upon life's many wonders which we so often take for granted. The outcome can only be one of increasing awareness of the legitimacy of time honored spiritual teachings. Indeed it may prove to be a special contribution to this age in supplementing the concepts of the past by providing more convincing evidence for what was formerly a matter of blind beliefs.

THE UNITARIAN
CHRISTIAN IS
GROWING!
FROM 12 to 16 PAGES
THIS MONTH

LEST WE FORGET

(Contributed)

Christianity begins with the simple and sublime teaching and the simple and sublime life of Jesus. The substance of his gospel was that by righteousness, love, and service men enter into the Kingdom of God and commune with God as Father and Friend. We are to know God, to trust Him, to do His will, to be joyous, patient, and faithful in our union with Him, and in this devoted and serene spirit to do good to others with unwearied charity. Wickedness and sin are terrible realities to Jesus, and he is unsparing in severity when he speaks of them. But greater than wickedness and sin is God's forgiving love, which is never withheld from the repentant heart. A Father's home and a Father's love forever await the contrite prodigal who has turned away from his sin.

This was the chief burden of the preaching of Jesus. In words of grandeur never equaled, but of a simplicity understood by the common people, he bade men love and trust, pray and repent, hope and serve. He brought to us gladness, beauty, a human nature to revere and a God adorable and lovable altogether . . .

In our time the creeds are fast falling. Throughout a long period Unitarian Christians have been blamed and rebuked for refusing to substitute teachings *about* Jesus for the teachings *of* Jesus. Yet every day Christian orthodoxy approaches nearer to the truth for which we have long borne witness. If we may justly be gratified at this, we must recognize how great a responsibility it puts upon us. We are to prove that a simple faith may yet be sublime. We are to show that without the constraint and terrors of creeds we are one with Jesus in his sincerity, in his religiousness, in his srvice and his sacrifice. Thus will the ages complete their round; and while we go forward to the new duties of an enlarged world of thought and action, we shall find in the unclouded figure of the Founder of Christianity, just as he was, the chief source of our inspiration and our faith.

— *William Laurence Sullivan*

FAITH TO LIVE BY

By Rev. Alfred B. Rollins, *Minister*
All Souls Unitarian Church, Dade County, Florida

To those who are more than superficial the search for a balancing influence in life engages much of their endeavor. It is easy to grow onesided and biased, in fact, perhaps the majority of people are so developed. At any rate there seems to be an alarming increase of personal dissatisfaction in life around us today .

Some people give vent to their emotional urges and seek to satisfy their selfish desires and make their self-centered dreams come true. They cater to their lesser selves until they are but so many pounds of rank selfishness, miserable in their own right and making the lives of those around them unhappy. Others become obsessed with the sense of their own intellectual attainments and seek within their minds the solution to all personal problems.

It is with the latter in mind that we dedicate this article entitled, "A Faith to Live By."

The years of study, observation and close contact with humans and their problems have convinced me that reason is not enough to live by. Reason is but one department of human life. The use of it is exciting and rewarding and presses us to more industrious pursuit. It increases our sense of self-importance and grows more and more fascinating.

Reason, however, may well develop into a fetish as real and deadly to our spiritual natures as any superstitious dogma that man has ever espoused. When man thus raises the fetish of reason he has imprisoned his soul in a tomb of eternal despair. From that cold and unresponsive cell he cannot see the stars "shine through the cypress trees." His sky of life is grey and foreboding.

I shall never forget my reaction, when, many years ago I first came across the words of Bertrand Russell:

". . . . only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

Here is no philosophy for man to live by. How tragically it is proven. Each passing day we see the fruits of what is proudly called "pure reason" in self-pity and self destruction. When we thus draw the dark blanket of despair over us we are helplessly smothered in the futility of our own frustrations. There is much of truth in the story of the little boy. He was riding on the open trolley on his way home from Sunday-school. Suddenly his sharp little voice was heard crying out, "Stop the trolley, stop the trolley, I've lost my faith in God!" The little picture card that he had received from his Sunday-school teacher had blown away. On the card had been the words, "Have faith in God!" The years have brought that incident to my mind many times as I have beheld people, bereft of faith and crying pitifully in their hearts for that which they would never find again.

Reason can be a dire and deadly thing. It may leave its victim cold and hopeless in the world it fails to comprehend. None of us will ever understand ourselves or others well enough to say "we know." How then can we exepct to cast into the crucible of reason the greater problems of the larger life . . . . or of a life beyond. If this be so, what sort of reasoning is it to declare that there is no other life . . . . there is no life beyond?

The thought I am presenting is beautifully expressed in the familiar lines by Santayana, entitled:

FAITH

"O World, thou choosest not the better part!
It is not wisdom to be only wise,
And on the inward vision close the eyes,
But it is wisdom to believe the heart.
Columbus found a world and had no chart,
Save one that faith deciphered in the skies;
To trust the soul's invincible surmise
Was all his science and his only art.
Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystery and dread.
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the mortal heart is led
Unto the thinking of the thought divine."

Faith begins where knowledge leaves off. It is not the antithesis of knowledge but rather the supplement of it. Where certainty prevails there is no need of faith. It is where the way becomes uncertain and the light of understanding fails that the value of faith becomes paramount. It is like a man who

follows a path through the forest and is suddenly surrounded by darkness. If the path be there he has but to pursue his way carefully, step by step, ever feeling the hard and solid ground beneath his feet. Knowledge brought him on the way to the point of darkness and in the darkness he presses forward to his chosen destination. So we move along the course of life by the light of knowledge as far as we may be favored by it, by the assurance of faith when knowledge is exhausted.

Faith, to be a real faith must have a basis of reason. Revealed faith is not sufficient. It is an easy prop, well enough for the lazy, untutored soul but most insecure. Faith to be vital, and vibrant must be a matter of thought . . . . a good fruit of reason. Emerson has said: "A man cannot be said to have a religion until he has thought about it." Faith is a particular and personal quality, a trust well founded and well established by the individual. Unless it is that it is no faith at all but a sort of mimicry of faith, a futile borrowing of another's cherished treasure that holds no lustre for its pseudo owner. Faith is as vital to the growth and comfort of the soul as reason is to the seeking mind or ethics to the social creature.

It is not an easy thing to gain Faith . . . . a real Faith . . . . a faith to live by. It is not to be wondered at that scores of people about us wander in the fogs of doubt and insecurity. Many of them have come to the place where they could no longer continue in the blind beliefs which had been thrust upon them. No longer able to cling to the infallibility of traditions, they easily fall into suspicion of everything. From believing everything that has been taught them without question they hastily conclude that there is nothing left to believe in. They are not aware that they have now become as unscientific and unreasonable in their present extreme as they were in the former. It is here that the groping soul needs a patience and equilibrium that will pilot it safely between the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis.

To begin at scratch and work out a faith to live by is a task that requires the most intense desire and utter devotion to the task. It challenges all the spiritual vitality of the seeker but it is essential to his happiness. The search may not be rewarding at first, it may seem hopeless for many a year but I believe that the sincere soul will, somehow in the search find the answer to its cry.

If I did no more in this sermon than to say what I have said I should feel that I had done nothing constructive. My desire, is in some way, to bring to you a suggestion of where that living faith may be found. I do not, however, propose a blueprint or a set of rules. All I can do is to suggest what my own experience has led me to believe. I trust that I can make it clear enough so that you can see what I mean by a "faith that has a basis of knowledge."

First.

I have faith in a continuing order. I am well aware of all the dire forebodings of our scientists about the final end of this earth order. Those forebodings disturb me not the least. In the thousands of years to be, let come what will to this least of all the planets. My faith is in that which supersedes the earth, the sun, and all the solar systems. These things did not come by chance but by the action of some super-energy. I have no fears that the power that brought such gigantic systems into being will fail to perpetuate the eternal plan. Whatever the meaning of this universe may be I shall never know. Enough for me that I stand, today, upon this earth, a single being on a single planet with a living faith in the continuing order of the things that are.

Second.

I have faith in the great Creative process. The unfolding of the evolution of plant and animal life upon this earth is a miracle too unbelievable to ascribe to chance. It seems obvious to the thoughtful student that all life tends to grope its way upward to the light. Each new level of evolution is more wonderful than the last. Who of us who have compared the multiple cell with its single celled ancestor have not stood amazed before the marvel of it. With what awe we observe the intricate structure of the human brain, the nervous system and other systems that together form the creature we call man. What is the meaning of all this astounding development? Probably we shall never know. Yet do we not behold a chain of purpose running through it all? A purpose that more and more tends to produce a perfect creature?

Third.

I have faith in the deathlessness of the higher virtues. Whether or not evolution has reachde its physical peak in the creation of man is problemati-

cal. It does seem, however, that man has been challenged to the attainment of a higher spiritual level by the very nature which has been bestowed upon him. He has had, not only glimpses of the spiritual possibilities that confront him, but he has had actual demonstrations of that spirtiual attainment by his own kind. Those, in every age of history, who have given themselves to the aesthetic and the spiritual have demonstrated man's higher level. Whosoever gives himself to the accomplishment of the good, the true and the beautiful in life, by so doing leads his kind in the attainment of the highest level conceivable to man. Where did man get the impetus to the higher virtues? Oh, I know the sort of answer some of my friends would make to this. He gets the higher virtues from his background culture and training. He is taught these things or else he would not know of them. Perhaps so . . . . perhaps not. It is all a bit naive to me. I always come to the question of who taught the first man kindness, sympathy, love? Did he stumble upon it by blind chance or had something been implanted within him that led to such high qualities? If so, by whom? So my living faith includes faith in whatever power caused to waken in man the tendency to the higher virtues, the spiritual nature.

Fourth.

I have faith in a higher intelligence. I say this with the full realization that many will scoff. Again I base my faith on demonstrations and observations. It is not less than amazing that a man claims his own handiwork as a direct result of his personal skill all the while he blandly avers that the universe, the earth, the tree, the flower, the animal, in fact all created things about him just came to be . . . . happened so . . . . were matters of chance. To say that the force behind creation is less intelligent than man, or not intelligent at all is, according to my thinking, the height of human egotism and folly. My living faith is in a higher intelligence than man, an intelligence that has made a purposeful plan, created according to that plan and works to a final fulfillment.

Fifth.

I have faith in myself. This has been left till last for I believe that one cannot trust oneself alone. There is much talk today about having faith in yourself, drawing on your inward reserve, facing problems with cold reason and such like. It seems to me that the man left to do this with no faith in something beyond himself, more loving than himself, more intelligent than himself is very apt to distrust himself completely. So, I say that I must have faith in myself . . . . but not in myself alone. I have faith in myself as an integral part of a great cosmic plan. I do not think of myself as the center of that plan with the planets whirling about me. I think of myself as a sharer in life, a life that is thousands of times more important than I. I then become important, not as the person for which all else exists but as one who exists to be a part of the greater whole. I have faith in myself because I am. Nothing can destroy me but myself. I may destroy myself by my very self-seeking . . . . by my sharing I may save myself.

This is my living faith.

YOUR MANAGING
EDITOR SAYS

"THE UNITARIAN
CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY"

IS REACHING MORE PEOPLE.

BUT — THE CAUSE IT REPRESENTS MUST REACH EVER MORE PEOPLE.

OURS IS A VOLUNTARY EFFORT. NO SERVICES IN THE PUBLICATION OF THE PUBLICATION OF THIS MAGAZINE, (NOW FIVE YEARS OLD) ARE PAID FOR. *IT IS BECAUSE* WE ALL BELIEVE IN IT THAT WE BELIEVE WE CAN COUNT UPON YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS!

— Rev. Heinz Rettig —
Newburyport, Mass.

(See Back Cover)

LOVE IN FAITH

By Rev. George E. McDonough
Clackamas, Oregon

The acceptance of Jesus is an act of love. It is the result of an encounter with a dimension of existence which puts unique beauty into life. It is an experience by which one is transfigured, not in any external or theatrical way, but by having a center to his being, a point of reference by which all things and all men, including one's self, are judged. The acceptance of Jesus as Lord means that a person once walked the earth who exemplified what a human being could be if he thought, felt and acted in a certain way, and that henceforth this person shall be one's Master and Model. It is very simple. It is matter of falling in love with a transcendingly magnificent soul. To be a true Christian this is all that is required: that one love Jesus Christ the Lord and faithfully serve his spirit.

This matter of being a Christian is not one of theology; it is one of value. When you fall in love with a person, the attraction, the dedication, the experience all precede any intellectual analysis of love. All you know is that you love. If it is true love you can never reduce that love to reasons. Elizabeth Barrett Browning put the matter clearly in one of her Portugese Sonnets:

> If thou must love me, let it be for nought
> Except for love's sake only. Do not say
> "I love her for her smile — her look —
> her way
> Of speaking gently, — for a trick of thought
> That falls in well with mine, and certes
> brought
> A sense of pleasant ease on such a day" —
> For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
> Be changed, or change for thee, — and
> love, so wrought
> May be unwrought so,
> But love me for love's sake.

One could try to give reasons for his loves, but they would never really make them understandable. The same is true about the love for Jesus the Lord. Theologians down through the centuries have speculated about the nature of Jesus. Was he divine or human? Was he God or Man? People have debated these questions for generations, taken sides and been vicious. They have started new denominations and sects over some theory about Jesus, and all those who have not agreed with their tenets have been excluded. But this is as ridiculous as finding a group of people who love America, and then branding them because they love their country for different reasons. The reasons are interesting, sometimes they are even enlightening. But they are not the love. Theology is a group of reasons, a group of analyses; sometimes a group of absurdities. But love is its own justification and its own end. To those who love Jesus and acknowledge his supremacy, no other reasons are necessary.

We love Jesus the Lord for love's sake, too, because when his life is told to us, we know that such love as he showed is the rarest treasure of existence. What makes true Christians is the common object of their love: Jesus Christ.

If we could leave it at that! If we could say with almost naive and childish simplicity, "I do not know why I love him, I just do!" But man is an intellectual creature; he wants to know the reasons for everything; he wants to dissect and explain everything. It never dawns on some people that much of experience is beyond explanation. Why do you like flowers? Why do the stars give you a sense of expansion and peace? Why does a beautiful child fill you with wonder? Why does a circle seem an object of delight? The only true answer is that one doesn't know why; they just do.

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